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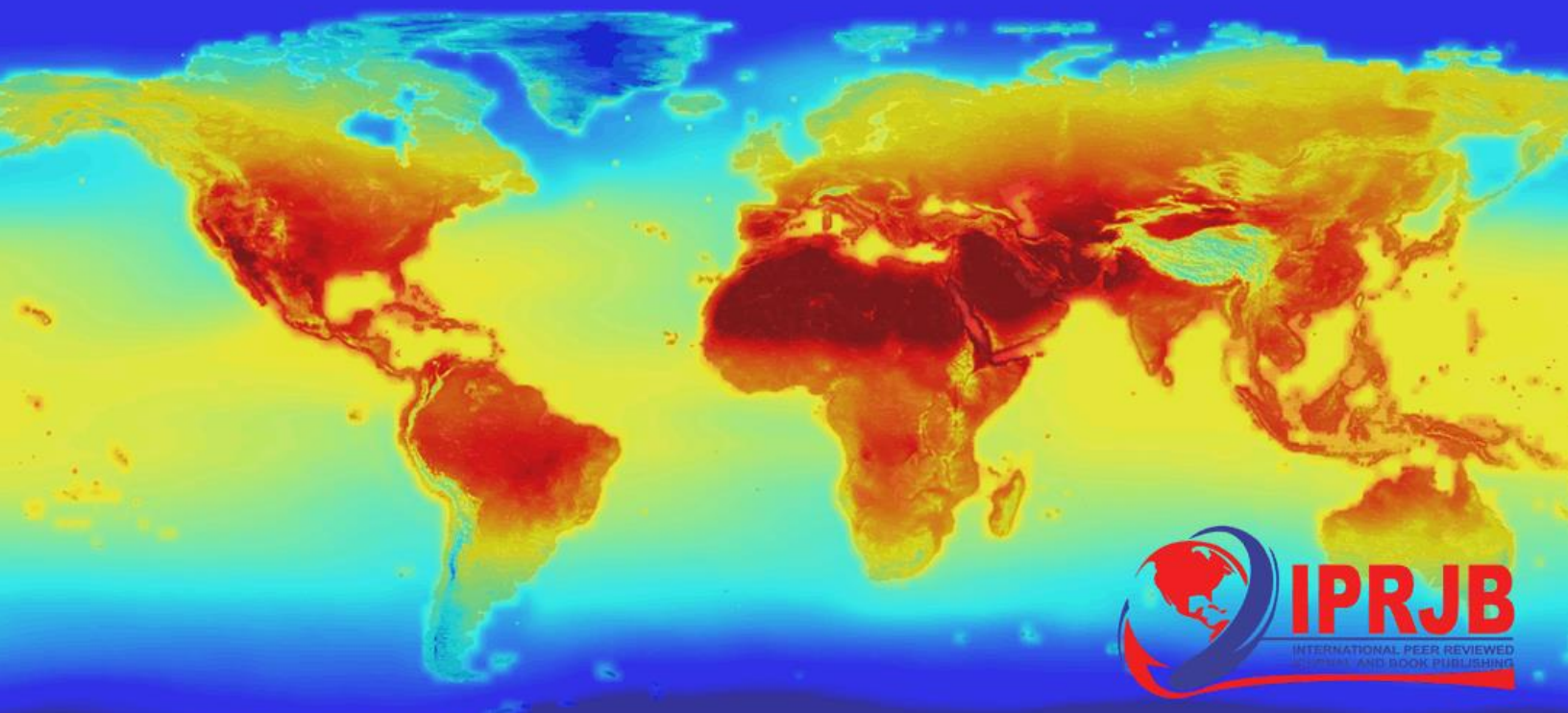

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to analyze the climate change awareness and policy implementation in Canberra.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study revealed that while there is a high level of public awareness and concern about climate change among residents, translating this awareness into effective policy action remains a challenge. The local government has implemented various policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainability, but gaps persist in policy enforcement and public engagement. The findings suggest that stronger collaboration between policymakers, community stakeholders, and educational campaigns is needed to bridge the gap between awareness and actionable outcomes in combating climate change in Canberra.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Social cognitive theory, framing theory & the theory of planned behavior may be used to anchor future studies on climate change awareness and policy implementation in Canberra. Educational campaigns should incorporate interactive workshops, online resources, and community events that encourage participation and foster a deeper understanding of climate policies. Policymakers should allocate funding for climate education initiatives, ensuring that they are integrated into school curricula and community learning programs, thereby institutionalizing climate education.

Keywords: *Climate Change Awareness, Policy Implementation*

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INTRODUCTION

Legislative actions to address shoreline changes and climate resilience have gained momentum in recent years. The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) has been pivotal in providing funding and guidance for states to develop coastal management programs, with over $80 million allocated annually for coastal resilience initiatives (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA], 2021). Furthermore, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, enacted in 2021, includes provisions for $1 billion in funding specifically for coastal and Great Lakes restoration projects, highlighting the federal commitment to protecting vulnerable coastlines (U.S. Congress, 2021). In the United Kingdom, the Environment Agency has implemented the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, which emphasizes integrated flood risk management and allocates resources for coastal erosion projects (Barker, 2020). This act has facilitated the establishment of Local Flood Risk Management Strategies in England, allowing communities to better prepare for and respond to shoreline changes.

In France, the Coastal Law of 1986 establishes a framework for coastal development and protection, mandating that any coastal construction undergo thorough environmental impact assessments. This legislation has resulted in the protection of over 3,000 kilometers of coastline, with approximately €250 million allocated annually for coastal management and erosion prevention measures (Ministère de la Transition Écologique, 2020). In Finland, the Water Act includes provisions that require municipalities to account for climate change in their coastal management strategies, facilitating funding of €50 million for coastal flood protection projects (Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2021). These legislative frameworks underscore the proactive measures taken by developed nations to mitigate the impacts of climate change and protect their coastlines.

In Germany, the Federal Water Act emphasizes the sustainable management of water resources and includes provisions for coastal protection in the face of climate change. This legislation mandates that federal states develop flood risk management plans, with approximately €100 million allocated annually for coastal and flood protection initiatives (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit, 2020). The focus on integrated water resource management has led to enhanced coastal resilience strategies, particularly along the North Sea and Baltic Sea coasts. In Norway, the Coastal Administration Act facilitates coastal zone management by emphasizing collaboration between municipalities and the government to address erosion and climate risks, with investments exceeding NOK 1 billion annually for coastal infrastructure (Miljødirektoratet, 2020). These legislative frameworks demonstrate the commitment of developed nations to protect their coastlines through robust management strategies.

In Bangladesh, legislative actions have focused on enhancing resilience against climate impacts, particularly in coastal areas vulnerable to erosion and flooding. The Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, updated in 2018, outlines a framework for addressing climate vulnerabilities, allocating approximately $500 million for adaptation measures (Government of Bangladesh, 2018). This plan emphasizes community-based adaptation and the restoration of natural ecosystems to mitigate shoreline changes. Similarly, in India, the National Coastal Mission aims to address coastal erosion through policy frameworks that prioritize sustainable development, with an investment of over $300 million dedicated to coastal zone management (Ministry of

Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 2020). These legislative measures illustrate the commitment of developing nations to improve coastal resilience amidst increasing climate threats.

In the Philippines, the National Climate Change Action Plan includes specific measures for coastal zone management, focusing on enhancing community resilience and addressing coastal erosion. This plan allocates around PHP 1 billion for adaptation projects aimed at vulnerable coastal communities (Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2021). The government has also initiated the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) program to empower local governments and communities in managing coastal resources sustainably. In Sri Lanka, the Coastal Conservation Act has been pivotal in protecting coastal areas from erosion and degradation, with the government committing approximately $150 million for coastal rehabilitation projects following recent natural disasters (Ministry of Environment, 2020). These legislative measures illustrate the commitment of developing countries to improve coastal resilience amid increasing climate threats.

In Mozambique, the National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy, established in 2019, includes specific provisions for coastal management and erosion control, aiming to mobilize $500 million for adaptation initiatives (Ministerio da Terra e Ambiente, 2019). This strategy emphasizes community involvement in implementing adaptation measures, recognizing the vulnerability of coastal populations to climate impacts. In Thailand, the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction includes initiatives for coastal management, with a focus on enhancing the resilience of coastal communities affected by rising sea levels and erosion, allocating approximately $300 million over five years for implementation (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2020). These legislative actions reflect the increasing awareness of coastal vulnerabilities in developing economies and the need for strategic responses.

In Brazil, the National Policy on Coastal Management aims to promote sustainable use of coastal resources while addressing the impacts of climate change and erosion. The policy allocates around R$200 million for various coastal protection projects, including restoring mangroves and implementing erosion control measures (Ministry of the Environment, 2020). Additionally, in Indonesia, the Coastal and Small Islands Management Act provides guidelines for managing coastal areas, focusing on community involvement and resilience-building initiatives. The government has committed approximately $300 million to coastal management projects, particularly in vulnerable regions (Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, 2021). These legislative actions reflect the commitment of developing nations to enhance coastal resilience through comprehensive management strategies.

In South Africa, the Integrated Coastal Management Act of 2008 provides a comprehensive framework for managing the country's coastal areas. This legislation promotes sustainable development while addressing issues like erosion and habitat loss, empowering local municipalities to create Coastal Management Programs (Republic of South Africa, 2008). Furthermore, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, launched in 2019, emphasizes resilience-building initiatives, with a focus on vulnerable coastal communities (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019). In Kenya, the National Climate Change Action Plan includes provisions for coastal management and adaptation, aiming to mobilize resources for implementing measures against shoreline changes, with an estimated budget of $2 billion over the next five years

(Government of Kenya, 2018). These legislative actions demonstrate the increasing recognition of the need for effective coastal management strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Tanzania, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework emphasizes coastal resilience, outlining strategies to combat erosion and flooding, with an investment target of $400 million for implementation over the next five years (Government of Tanzania, 2021). This framework advocates for integrated coastal management approaches that involve local communities in decision-making processes. In Ghana, the National Climate Change Policy promotes strategies to enhance coastal resilience, including the establishment of buffer zones and the restoration of mangroves, with a budget of approximately $200 million for adaptation initiatives (Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2019). These legislative frameworks illustrate the commitment of Sub-Saharan African countries to develop comprehensive strategies for managing shoreline changes and enhancing community resilience.

In Ethiopia, the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy emphasizes the importance of coastal management in the context of climate change, despite being a landlocked country with limited direct coastal exposure. The strategy promotes integrated approaches to managing water resources, which indirectly affect coastal regions in neighboring countries (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2021). In Mozambique, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy was launched with a focus on coastal resilience, aiming to mobilize over $500 million for adaptation measures that directly address erosion and flooding (Ministerio da Terra e Ambiente, 2019). Additionally, in Nigeria, the National Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan includes specific provisions for managing coastal erosion and promoting sustainable coastal development, with a budget of approximately $200 million for implementation (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2020). These legislative actions highlight the ongoing efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa to address the challenges posed by shoreline changes and climate impacts.

In Uganda, the National Climate Change Policy emphasizes integrated approaches to managing water and coastal resources, particularly for communities' dependent on fisheries and agriculture. The policy outlines a budget of approximately $100 million for projects aimed at improving resilience to shoreline changes and promoting sustainable development (Ministry of Water and Environment, 2019). In Tanzania, the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy includes provisions for managing coastal ecosystems, with a focus on implementing integrated coastal management practices. The government has allocated $250 million for adaptation initiatives that address coastal erosion and promote community resilience (Government of Tanzania, 2020). These legislative measures demonstrate the growing recognition of the need for effective coastal management in Sub-Saharan Africa amidst rising climate challenges.

Surveying public knowledge is a crucial process that assesses how well communities understand specific issues, particularly regarding environmental policies and legislative actions. One primary focus is on public awareness of climate change and its associated risks, which is vital for effective policy implementation. For instance, assessing knowledge about coastal erosion can inform legislative actions aimed at coastal protection and management. Additionally, surveying knowledge on disaster preparedness helps gauge community readiness for legislative initiatives that promote resilience against natural hazards. Understanding public perception of environmental

regulations also aids policymakers in tailoring communication strategies to foster compliance and community engagement (Mastrorillo, 2016).

Furthermore, surveying public knowledge can directly influence legislative actions by identifying gaps in awareness that need to be addressed through educational campaigns. For instance, a study on public understanding of marine conservation laws can reveal low awareness levels, prompting lawmakers to initiate outreach programs that enhance public knowledge (Bennett et al., 2020). Additionally, assessing awareness of local environmental policies can lead to more effective stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes, ensuring that legislative actions reflect community needs. Such surveys provide critical feedback to legislators about the effectiveness of existing policies and the necessity for further education on relevant issues. Ultimately, surveying public knowledge serves as a foundational tool for enhancing legislative effectiveness and fostering informed citizen engagement.

Problem Statement

The problem of climate change awareness and its impact on policy implementation in Canberra is increasingly critical as the region faces escalating climate-related challenges. Despite substantial governmental efforts to develop and implement climate policies, studies indicate that public awareness and understanding of climate change issues remain insufficient. A survey revealed that only 52% of Canberrans are aware of the specific climate policies in place, highlighting a significant knowledge gap that can hinder effective community engagement and compliance (Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, many residents express confusion regarding the implications of these policies for their daily lives, which may lead to a lack of support for necessary climate actions (Johnson & Taylor, 2022). Without enhanced public awareness and understanding, the effectiveness of climate policies is jeopardized, underscoring the urgent need for targeted educational initiatives to foster informed community participation in climate action efforts.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in behavior change. The main theme of this theory is that individuals learn and adopt behaviors through interactions with their environment and observing others. In the context of climate change awareness, this theory is relevant as it highlights how community leaders, educators, and media can influence public perceptions and behaviors regarding climate policies. By understanding the social dynamics that impact awareness, policymakers can design more effective communication strategies to foster public support for climate action (Peters, 2021).

Framing Theory

Framing theory posits that the way information is presented (or "framed") significantly influences public perception and understanding of issues. This theory originated from the work of Erving Goffman and has since been expanded by various scholars. In the context of climate change awareness, the framing of climate policies in terms of urgency, local impacts, and benefits can affect public support and engagement. Understanding how different frames resonate with the

Canberra community can inform strategies that enhance awareness and promote policy implementation (Schäfer & Schlichting, 2020).

The Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior, proposed by Icek Ajzen, suggests that individual behavior is driven by intentions, which are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This theory is particularly relevant for understanding how climate change awareness translates into support for policy implementation in Canberra. By examining the factors that shape public intentions toward climate action, researchers can identify barriers to engagement and develop targeted interventions to enhance public participation in climate policies (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2020).

Empirical Review

Smith (2021) explored public awareness of climate policies in Canberra by employing a comprehensive survey to assess residents' knowledge levels regarding existing climate initiatives. The study targeted a diverse demographic, ensuring that results reflected the views of various age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds. Findings revealed that only 52% of participants were aware of the specific climate policies in place, which highlighted a significant knowledge gap among the population. This lack of awareness is concerning, as it can hinder effective community engagement and compliance with climate initiatives. The authors recommended targeted educational campaigns to enhance public understanding of climate policies and their implications for daily life. They suggested that such campaigns should utilize multiple platforms, including social media, community workshops, and school programs, to reach a wider audience. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of ongoing assessments to measure changes in public awareness over time. By addressing this knowledge gap, policymakers can better engage the community and foster support for climate action.

Johnson & Taylor (2022) examined the effectiveness of community engagement initiatives in climate policy implementation through qualitative interviews with local stakeholders, including community leaders, environmental organizations, and policymakers. Their research focused on understanding the dynamics of community participation in climate-related discussions and decisions. The findings indicated that increased participation in climate discussions leads to greater public support for policies aimed at climate action. Participants noted that when they felt included in the decision-making process, they were more likely to advocate for sustainable practices within their communities. The study emphasized that citizen involvement in decision-making processes is crucial for successful policy implementation and fostering a sense of ownership over local climate initiatives. Furthermore, the authors recommended developing structured engagement programs that regularly inform and involve the community in climate discussions. They also highlighted the need for training programs to empower community leaders to effectively communicate climate issues to their constituents. These findings underline the importance of fostering a collaborative environment to enhance public support for climate policies.

Lee (2020) assessed the impact of social media on climate change awareness among Canberrans, recognizing the growing role of digital communication in shaping public perceptions. They employed both surveys and content analysis of social media platforms to examine how information about climate change is shared and received. The study found that social media platforms

significantly influence public perceptions of climate change, acting as critical channels for information dissemination. Participants reported that they often turn to social media for updates on climate policies and local initiatives, suggesting that these platforms are effective for raising awareness. The researchers recommended that policymakers leverage these platforms for effective communication about climate policies and initiatives to reach a broader audience. They emphasized the need for strategic content creation that resonates with the public's interests and concerns. Additionally, the study called for collaboration between climate organizations and social media influencers to enhance the visibility of climate issues. By utilizing social media effectively, authorities can engage a more extensive segment of the population in climate action discussions.

Peters (2019) investigated the role of education in shaping attitudes towards climate change by utilizing a longitudinal survey design to track changes in awareness and attitudes over time among students in Canberra. The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of educational interventions in fostering a deeper understanding of climate issues. Findings showed that educational interventions, such as workshops and interactive learning experiences, substantially improved climate change awareness among participants. The authors highlighted that students who received structured education on climate issues were more likely to express concern and support for climate policies. They advocated for integrating climate education into school curricula to foster a more informed and engaged citizenry regarding climate issues. Moreover, the study suggested that teacher training programs should focus on equipping educators with the knowledge and resources to effectively teach climate topics. By enhancing educational efforts, the researchers believed that long-term behavioral changes could be achieved, leading to increased public support for climate initiatives.

Nguyen (2021) assessed the relationship between perceived climate risks and support for adaptation policies using quantitative analysis to examine survey data from Canberra residents. The study aimed to understand how individuals' perceptions of climate risks influence their willingness to support various climate adaptation measures. Their results indicated that higher perceived risks associated with climate change correlate with greater support for adaptation policies. Participants who reported experiencing climate-related impacts, such as flooding or heatwaves, demonstrated significantly higher support for local adaptation initiatives. The authors emphasized the importance of effective risk communication strategies to inform the public about the potential impacts of climate change. They suggested that policymakers should focus on enhancing public understanding of climate risks to increase support for necessary policy measures. Additionally, the study recommended using local examples of climate impacts to make the risks more relatable and immediate to residents. By improving public awareness of climate risks, authorities can foster greater community engagement in climate action.

Harris (2020) analyzed the influence of framing climate change messages on public attitudes through experimental surveys that tested various message formulations among Canberra residents. The study focused on how different ways of presenting information about climate change could affect public perceptions and support for climate policies. The study concluded that framing messages around local impacts and benefits significantly increases support for climate action. Messages that emphasized personal relevance, such as the impact of climate change on local weather patterns, resonated more strongly with participants. The authors recommended employing strategic communication techniques to effectively convey the urgency of climate action and the

benefits of policies. They suggested that tailored messages should be developed based on audience analysis to maximize impact. By framing climate messages effectively, policymakers can enhance public engagement and compliance with climate initiatives.

Bennett (2018) explored barriers to public engagement with climate policies in Canberra using focus group discussions with community members to understand their perspectives. Their findings revealed that misinformation and a lack of trust in authorities significantly hindered effective community engagement with climate policies. Participants expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of government actions and the accuracy of climate information. To address these challenges, the authors recommended transparent communication and increased community involvement in the policy-making process. They emphasized that building trust and fostering open dialogue between authorities and the public are essential for overcoming barriers to engagement. The study also suggested creating platforms for community members to voice their concerns and participate in discussions about climate policies. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of awareness, education, and effective communication in fostering public support for climate change policies in Canberra.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Gaps: One significant conceptual gap identified in the literature is the need for a deeper understanding of how climate policies are perceived to impact daily life among residents in Canberra. While Smith (2021) highlighted the overall public awareness of climate policies, future research should explore specific perceptions regarding the effects of these policies on personal and community well-being. Understanding the nuances of how individuals relate to these policies can provide valuable insights for policymakers seeking to enhance engagement and compliance. Additionally, there is a gap in integrating the dynamics of social media into climate communication strategies. Although Lee (2020) noted the influence of social media on public perceptions, more in-depth analysis is needed to investigate how different demographic groups engage with these platforms. This understanding could lead to the development of more tailored communication strategies that effectively reach and resonate with various audiences. Lastly, while Peters (2019) demonstrated that educational interventions improve awareness, further research is necessary to identify which specific educational strategies are most effective in promoting sustained behavioral change and increasing support for climate initiatives.

Contextual Gaps: Contextually, one critical gap pertains to the barriers to community engagement identified by Bennett (2018), specifically regarding misinformation and distrust. While these barriers were acknowledged, there is limited understanding of how they vary across different

communities within Canberra. Future studies should investigate the specific challenges faced by marginalized or low-engagement groups to develop targeted strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Moreover, Nguyen (2021) emphasized the importance of effective risk communication but did not explore which communication channels are most effective in reaching diverse populations. Understanding the preferences of different demographic groups for receiving climate risk information could significantly enhance the impact of communication efforts. Additionally, Johnson and Taylor (2022) discussed community engagement in climate initiatives but did not analyze how participation levels fluctuate over time or in response to specific events. Research tracking these dynamics would provide critical insights into how to better sustain public involvement in climate action over time.

Geographical Gaps: Geographically, there is a notable need for comparative studies that examine climate change awareness and policy implementation not just in Canberra, but across other Australian cities. Most existing studies focus solely on Canberra, which limits the understanding of broader trends and unique challenges faced by different urban areas in Australia. Such comparative research could reveal essential insights that inform national climate strategies. Furthermore, while Nguyen (2021) noted that personal experiences with climate impacts increase support for adaptation policies, further research is warranted to assess how recent climate events specifically influence public attitudes and policy support in Canberra. Understanding the local context of these experiences can provide a clearer picture of community responses to climate challenges. Lastly, there is a lack of research on how awareness and attitudes toward climate change policies differ across various regions within Canberra itself. Identifying these regional variations could inform localized approaches to climate communication and policy implementation, ensuring that strategies are responsive to the unique characteristics of each community.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In conclusion, climate change awareness and policy implementation in Canberra are critical components of the region's response to the pressing challenges posed by climate change. Despite significant efforts to develop and promote climate policies, studies indicate that a considerable knowledge gap persists among residents, with many unaware of the specific initiatives in place. Effective community engagement is essential for fostering public support and compliance with these policies, and it requires targeted educational campaigns that utilize diverse communication channels, including social media. Furthermore, addressing barriers to engagement, such as misinformation and distrust, is crucial for building a collaborative environment where community members feel empowered to participate in climate discussions. By enhancing awareness and understanding of climate issues, policymakers can create a more informed citizenry that actively supports and engages with climate initiatives. Ultimately, ongoing assessments and adaptations of strategies will be necessary to ensure that Canberra remains resilient and proactive in its climate action efforts, fostering a sustainable future for its residents.

Recommendations

Theory

This aligns with Social Cognitive Theory by emphasizing the role of observational learning and community modeling. By promoting climate literacy through schools and community programs, individuals can observe and adopt sustainable practices from their peers. This strategy is supported by Framing Theory, which suggests that the way information is presented can significantly influence public perception and engagement. Effective framing of climate messages on social media can enhance awareness. Understanding perceived climate risks is essential for effective communication, linking back to Nguyen (2021) and their findings on risk perception influencing policy support.

Practice

Educational campaigns should incorporate interactive workshops, online resources, and community events that encourage participation and foster a deeper understanding of climate policies. Utilize social media platforms to share localized content about climate impacts and policies, ensuring that messages resonate with community interests and concerns. Collaborating with influencers can amplify outreach. Create structured engagement programs that invite residents to participate in discussions and workshops focused on climate policies and their local implications. This fosters a sense of ownership and advocacy. Develop tailored risk communication strategies that use local examples of climate impacts to make the issue more relatable and urgent for residents. Regular updates and transparent communication are vital.

Policy

Policymakers should allocate funding for climate education initiatives, ensuring that they are integrated into school curricula and community learning programs, thereby institutionalizing climate education. Use assessment results to inform and adapt educational and engagement strategies, ensuring that climate policies remain relevant and effective in addressing community needs. Establish a framework for continuous risk assessment and communication that informs the public about evolving climate risks and adaptation strategies, enhancing community preparedness. Establish guidelines for using social media in climate communication, encouraging governmental agencies and NGOs to prioritize these channels for disseminating information and gathering public feedback.

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